

UPMC Mercy



A Guide to the Emergency Department

Your Care. Our Commitment.

Welcome to UPMC Mercy Emergency Department

The staff at UPMC Mercy would like to make your visit with us as easy and comfortable as possible. Please read through this booklet — it explains Emergency Department (ED) processes and gives you information you need. Please feel free to ask questions and let us know how we can make your experience better.

Important Phone Number

Nurses Station: **412-232-8223**

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When You Arrive

Registration

If you have not arrived by ambulance, the first person you will talk to is the registrar. To keep your personal information private, the registrar will have you fill out a form with your name, date of birth, last 4 numbers of your Social Security number, reason for your visit, and the name of your primary care doctor (PCP). This information will allow the registrar to enter your data into the hospital's computer system.

Other information needed, like emergency contacts and insurance information, will be collected after you have been seen by a health care team member.

If You Are Waiting

Our goal is to see every patient as soon as possible, but patients who require more care, or are seriously ill or injured, are always treated first (even though they may have arrived at the ED after you). This means that when the ED is busy, some patients may have to wait to be seen. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

Providing high-quality care takes time. Your ED health care team may:

- Need time to learn your medical history.
- Be trying to get in touch with your PCP.
- Be waiting for the results of blood tests, x-rays, or specialized procedures.

If you start to feel worse while you are waiting, alert the nurse immediately.

Eating or Drinking

Please **do not** eat or drink until you ask our staff if it is OK. It is important not to eat or drink anything in case you need a procedure or test that requires an empty stomach.

Restroom Assistance

We do have restrooms available for your use. If you need any help, please ask our staff to escort you. **Before** using the restroom, please ask a health care team member if a urine or stool sample is needed to assist in your diagnosis.

Home Medicines/Allergies

Please give a list of home medicines, herbal supplements, and allergies to your health care team members so that we can ensure your safety and prevent interactions with any medicines you may be given during your stay.

Cell Phones

Cell phones may be used while in the hospital, but please do not use your phone when your health care team members are treating you. Please be respectful of others when using your phone in public spaces, such as hallways and the waiting room.

Personal Belongings

UPMC Mercy is not responsible for any personal belongings you have with you during your stay. If you are being admitted, please have a family member take any unnecessary belongings (valuables and medicines) home with them so that nothing gets lost or misplaced.

Special Needs

If you or a loved one has any special needs, please let our staff know so that we can get the right health care team member involved.

In the Treatment Room

After your basic registration is complete, you will be taken to a treatment space. If the ED is full, you will be seen by a triage nurse. The triage nurse will ask you about the reason for your visit and ask about any allergies. The nurse will also take your vital signs, such as your temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and pulse oximetry (oxygen) level.

The Word Triage Means “To Sort”

Triage nurses are specially trained to identify patients who may come into the ED with life-threatening conditions. At times, it may be necessary for a patient who arrives after you to be taken care of before you. Rest assured that you will be taken care of as soon as possible! After the triage process is complete, you may be asked to wait in the waiting room if the department is full and your condition is deemed non-life-threatening. If you are placed in the waiting room after triage, a staff member will come for you as soon as a room is available. Please remain seated in the waiting room until you are called.



Examination and Testing

Once you are in a treatment space, you will most likely be asked to change into a hospital gown. The gown opens in the back. You will be assigned a nurse who will get your medical history, along with other information.

You will be seen by the first available health care team member (ED doctor, resident, or advanced practice provider (APP) under the direction of a doctor) who will examine you and order testing if necessary. These tests may include:

- **Electrocardiogram (EKG) and/or continuous cardiac monitoring**
- **Blood work**
- **Urine testing**
- **Radiological studies — x-rays, CT scans**
- **IVs and/or medicines**
- **Other specialized tests or procedures**

Some tests may happen at your bedside. At other times, you may need to be moved to a different department for testing.

For some tests, such as enhanced CT scans, you may need to drink something known as oral contrast to prepare for the scan (many patients say it tastes like a very sweet carbonated beverage).

Diagnosis

Once the ED doctor has all your test results, a decision will be made about whether you need to stay in the hospital or if you can safely leave the hospital.

If You Are Being Kept Overnight

Many factors are taken into account for bed placement in our hospital. If your health care team members decide that you need to be kept overnight, please be patient. We will be working to find the right bed for your care, such as an observation unit or a hospital floor based on your diagnosis or planned treatment. Sometimes this takes only a few minutes, though it might take up to a few hours.

Visitors

UPMC Mercy knows how important it is for family and friends to be involved and support you in your care. For safety and privacy, the number of visitors is kept to a minimum in the ED. Every effort is made to keep your loved ones informed of your condition and allow them to be with you when possible.

Smoking

UPMC Mercy is a smoke-free facility. To effectively attend to your health care needs, we ask that you do not leave the ED to smoke.



Leaving Without Being Seen

If you have been waiting for a long time, you may feel tempted to leave the ED before you are seen by a doctor or APP. Please speak with a health care team member before you leave so that we can tell you about any possible problems you may face if you leave. Leaving the ED without being screened is a serious, perhaps life-threatening decision.

When You Are Ready to Leave the ED

- The nurse will give you a copy of your discharge directions and any prescriptions written for you, as well as explain everything to you.
- The nurse will answer any questions about your care or treatment.
- Please notify your PCP of your visit and schedule follow-up treatment if needed.
- Please take a copy of your ED discharge directions with you to your PCP follow-up appointment.
- If you don't have a PCP, we will be happy to refer you to one of our associated care providers.



Remember, our health care team treats your emergency only. We may recommend that you follow up with your PCP or a specialist after this ED visit for your continuing care and treatment.

Before leaving the ED, have your ID wristband removed and disposed of appropriately, and take the opportunity to make sure your information is correct. If your insurance requires a co-payment, it will be collected at the time of discharge.

Condition Help

The Condition Help program is a safety hotline for hospital patients and their families to call when there is:

- An emergency when patients or loved ones can't get the attention of hospital staff.
- A communication breakdown in how care is given.
- Uncertainty over what needs to be done.

To activate Condition Help, dial **111** from a hospital phone.

Parking

Parking is available near the ED entrance.

Transportation

Our Care Management department may make arrangements for you to go to another facility, such as a nursing home or rehabilitation facility. They also can help to arrange for services from community agencies, transportation upon discharge, and home nursing care or home health care equipment or supplies, if necessary.

You should make arrangements for a family member or friend to take you home from the hospital — whether you are being discharged from the ED or from a stay in the hospital — as soon as your discharge has been determined by your doctor.



UPMC Mercy

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UPMC.com/Mercy

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